



An Extended Guide · No. 1710

Conserving Water During an Outage

Easy tricks to make
your water go further

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! Read this first — on a well, no power means no water

On a home with a private well, a power outage isn't just dark — it's dry. The pump that lifts your water runs on your home's electricity, so when the power stops, every tap, toilet, and hose stops with it. Keep a few days of stored drinking water on hand as a backup you can count on — a common guideline is about a gallon per person per day. And know this from the start: a well pump is almost always a 240-volt appliance wired straight into your electrical panel, so any backup hookup for it is a licensed electrician's job. Never try to feed it with a cord or by backfeeding an outlet — that is unsafe, against code, and can put deadly voltage on the power lines outside. Conserving water is the free layer that makes every other layer last longer — it stretches your stored water, shortens how long the generator must run, and eases the septic pump too. Best of all, it costs nothing.

Conserving water during an outage

When the pump is off and your water is limited, a few simple habits make what you have go two or three times as far. This guide is a friendly bag of water-stretching tricks for a well-water outage.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. Conservation is the least glamorous part of outage planning and one of the most useful. It needs no equipment, no fuel, and no installation — just a handful of habits that turn a modest water store into plenty.

Think of it this way: every gallon you save is a gallon you do not have to store, pump, or haul. Conservation quietly multiplies everything else in your plan. So let's fill your toolkit with easy, sensible ways to stretch your water.

★ Want a conservation plan for your home?

Every household uses water differently. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we will find the easy savings that fit how you live.

The whole thing, in about a minute

If you remember only these things, you can stretch your water a long way.

- ❑ Drinking and cooking water come first — protect that supply above all else.
- ❑ For flushing, 'let it mellow' and flush with a bucket of saved water, not fresh.
- ❑ Reuse greywater — dishwater and washing water can flush a toilet.
- ❑ Switch to no-rinse hygiene and disposables to save the water washing would use.
- ❑ Wash dishes and hands in a basin, not under a running tap.
- ❑ Conservation stretches stored water, shortens generator runs, and eases the septic pump.

✓ Every gallon saved is a gallon you don't need

Conservation is the layer that makes all the others last longer. It costs nothing and starts the moment you decide to do it.

Protect your drinking water first

When water is limited, priorities matter. This is the order that keeps everyone safe and comfortable.

Drinking and cooking water is the top priority, always — it is what keeps people healthy, and it is the hardest to do without. A common planning guideline is about a gallon per person per day for drinking and cooking, so set that amount aside mentally and protect it. Everything else — flushing, washing, cleaning — comes after, and can use lower-grade or reused water.

This simple mental sorting — clean water for drinking, other water for everything else — is the heart of conservation. It means you never accidentally flush away or wash with the water you will want to drink tomorrow. Our storing-water guide covers keeping that drinking supply safe.

✓ Two grades of water

Keep your clean drinking water separate and sacred. Use general-use water — from the tub, buckets, or reuse — for flushing and cleaning. Never mix the two up.

Smart flushing — often the biggest saver

Flushing quietly uses a great deal of water. A few habits here save more than anywhere else in the house.

- **Let it mellow** — the old country wisdom: you need not flush after every use, especially for liquids.
- **Bucket-flush** — pour a bucket of saved water straight into the bowl to flush, no fresh water needed.
- **Use greywater** — dishwater, bathwater, and washing water are perfect for flushing.
- **Fill the tub early** — a bathtub of water, captured when the outage starts, is many flushes' worth.
- **Go outside where sensible** — for those who can, and where it is appropriate, it saves indoor water entirely.

A toilet flush uses a surprising amount of water, so cutting unnecessary flushes and using saved water for the rest is the single biggest lever most homes have. It also eases the load on a septic pump, if you have one — a double benefit.

✓ The bucket-flush trick

Pouring about a bucketful of water briskly into the toilet bowl makes it flush, no handle needed. Keep a bucket of general-use water by each bathroom during an outage.

Reuse water — let it work twice

In an outage, water can often do two jobs before it is gone. Reusing it stretches everything.

The water you wash dishes in, rinse vegetables with, or bathe in is called greywater — and while it is not for drinking, it is perfectly good for flushing or, in some cases, watering non-edible plants. Instead of letting it drain away, catch it in a basin or bucket and put it to a second use.

A dishpan of wash water becomes the next toilet flush. The water you rinsed your hands in tops up the flushing bucket. None of it needs to be wasted. This one habit — catching water instead of draining it — can cut your fresh-water use dramatically during an outage.

✓ Catch it, don't drain it

Put a basin in the sink and a bucket by the tub. Water that would run down the drain becomes your flushing supply instead. Simple, and it saves a lot.

Staying clean with little water

Hygiene does not have to stop when the water is limited. A few no-rinse helpers keep everyone comfortable.

- **Hand sanitizer** — for hands between the times you can spare water to wash.
- **Wet wipes and baby wipes** — for a quick clean-up with no water at all.
- **No-rinse body wash and dry shampoo** — made for exactly this, and a real comfort in a longer outage.
- **A basin and a washcloth** — a sponge bath uses a fraction of what a shower does.
- **Disposable plates and cups** — so there are simply fewer dishes to wash.

Keeping a small kit of these with your outage supplies means a long outage stays civilized. You will not be running the well pump just to wash up, and everyone stays comfortable on very little water. A little planning here goes a long way toward morale.

✓ A little hygiene kit

Tuck wipes, hand sanitizer, and some no-rinse products in with your outage supplies. They keep everyone comfortable while sipping water instead of pouring it.

Saving water in the kitchen

Cooking and cleaning up can be gentle on your water with a few easy switches.

Wash dishes in a basin of water rather than under a running tap, and save that dishwater for flushing afterward. Choose meals that need little water to cook and little cleanup — one-pot dishes, or foods that do not need boiling. Disposable plates and utensils cut dishwashing to almost nothing when water is tight.

Little habits add up: scrape plates instead of rinsing, wipe pans before washing, and keep a jug of drinking water on the counter so no one runs a tap for a sip. None of this is hard, and together it saves a surprising amount over a day.

✓ A basin, not a running tap

The single biggest kitchen saver is washing in a basin instead of under running water — and then using that basin water to flush. Two jobs from one panful.

Laundry and the big water users

Some things simply use a lot of water. In an outage, the easiest saving is to pause them.

Laundry is a heavy water user, so unless something truly must be washed, it is usually best to wait out the outage. The same goes for long showers, watering the lawn, washing the car, and topping off anything non-essential. These are the big draws, and pausing them is the easiest big saving there is.

If a small amount of laundry is unavoidable — for a baby, say — hand-washing a few items in a basin uses far less than a machine, and the water can be reused for flushing. But for most families, simply holding the big water jobs until power returns is the simplest choice.

✓ Pause the big jobs

Laundry, lawn watering, and long showers are the heavy hitters. Pausing them for the length of an outage is the easiest large saving you can make.

Animals and the garden — triage kindly

Out here, animals and gardens need water too. A little triage keeps priorities right without neglecting them.

Animals must have drinking water — that is not negotiable, and for livestock it can be a large amount, so plan it in alongside the family's needs. But animal drinking water need not be the same pristine supply as yours; clean general-use water is fine for most. Fill troughs before an outage when you can.

The garden, by contrast, can usually wait or make do. Save it for reused greywater and collected rain rather than fresh water, prioritize any young or fruiting plants, and let the lawn fend for itself. A garden bounces back; your drinking supply must not run short. Our storing-water guide covers planning animal needs.

✓ Animals drink, gardens wait

Give animals the clean-enough water they need, and let the garden get by on rain and reused water. The lawn will forgive you.

Two kinds of homes, two sets of needs

Conservation is smart anywhere, but it is essential for one kind of home and just thrifty for the other.

If you live in town or the suburbs

In town or the suburbs on city water, your taps keep flowing during a power outage, so conserving water is not a necessity — though it is never a bad habit, and it helps during a rare water-main break or boil advisory. Mostly, though, an outage does not force you to save water.

- City water keeps flowing in an outage, so conservation is optional, not urgent.
- The habits still help during a main break or a boil-water advisory.
- You can focus your outage effort on comfort and food.
- Good water habits lower your bill year-round anyway.

If you are out in the country on a well

Out in the country on a well, conservation is a genuine tool — it stretches your stored water, shortens how long the generator must run, and eases the septic pump. This is very much a rural skill.

- With the pump off, every gallon saved makes your stored water last longer.
- Less water used means shorter generator sessions and less fuel burned.
- Conserving down the drain also protects a septic pump from filling.
- In a long rural outage, these habits can be the difference between comfort and worry.

★ Let's find your easy savings

Every home has a few big water users worth pausing in an outage. Call me at (330) 200-8042 and we will spot yours and build simple habits around them.

In winter — melt snow for the thirsty jobs

A cold-weather outage brings a free water source right to your door, if you use it wisely.

In a snowy outage, melted snow is a ready source of water for flushing, cleaning, and other non-drinking jobs — and it costs nothing but a little warmth to melt. Bring in clean snow and let it melt by the woodstove or in a warm room. It takes a lot of snow to make a little water, so it is better for flushing than for drinking.

For drinking, melted snow should be treated first — boiling is simplest — since snow can carry whatever it landed on. But for topping up your flushing bucket, melted snow is a wonderful free supply that eases the load on everything else. Our winter guide covers cold-weather water in more depth.

✓ Snow for flushing, boiled for drinking

Melt clean snow for the thirsty non-drinking jobs, and it stretches your stored water beautifully. If you must drink it, boil it first.

Catch the rain when it comes

A rainy outage is a chance to refill your general-use supply for free.

A bucket or barrel under a downspout can catch a lot of water during a storm — exactly the kind of storm that often causes the outage in the first place. That rainwater is ideal for flushing, cleaning, and watering the garden, keeping those jobs off your stored drinking water entirely.

You do not need a fancy system; any clean container placed to catch roof runoff will do in a pinch. For drinking, treat collected rain first. But for the thirsty non-drinking jobs, caught rain is a gift that stretches everything else. Our hand-pump and manual guide covers rain collection too.

✓ A storm gives water as it takes power

The storm knocking out your power is also delivering free water. Set a few clean containers under the downspouts and let it fill your flushing supply.

Your simple conservation plan

Pulling the tricks together, here is a plan that stretches your water two or three times over.

- ❑ Protect drinking and cooking water first — keep it separate and clean.
- ❑ Let it mellow and bucket-flush with saved or greywater.
- ❑ Catch and reuse dishwater and washing water instead of draining it.
- ❑ Switch to no-rinse hygiene and disposables to save washing water.
- ❑ Pause the big users — laundry, long showers, the lawn.
- ❑ Top up with melted snow or caught rain for the thirsty jobs.

★ A little planning, a lot of water

These habits are easy once you have them in mind. Call or text (330) 200-8042 and we will tailor a simple conservation plan to your household.

How conservation helps every other layer

Conservation is not just its own layer — it makes all the others work better. That is why I love it.

Every gallon you save stretches your stored water further, so a modest store lasts much longer. It shortens the generator sessions needed to refill, saving fuel and giving you more quiet. And it slows the septic pump tank filling, protecting against a backup. One free habit improves three other parts of your plan at once.

That multiplying effect is why conservation belongs in every well-water outage plan, even one with a good generator and plenty of stored water. It costs nothing and makes everything else go further. There is simply no downside.

✓ The multiplier layer

Conservation is the one layer that improves all the others. A little saving means less stored water needed, less fuel burned, and less strain on the septic pump.

A few common myths, gently corrected

Conservation comes with a few myths. Here is the honest version.

The myth	The honest truth
I must flush after every single use.	In an outage, let it mellow and bucket-flush to save a lot.
Used water is useless.	Greywater is perfect for flushing — let it work twice.
I need a full shower to stay clean.	A basin sponge bath and no-rinse products keep you fresh on little water.
Conservation is only for droughts.	In a well-water outage, it stretches every other layer of your plan.

✓ **Small habits, big savings**

None of these habits is hard, and together they can make your water last two or three times as long. That is a lot from a little.

What I can do — and what stays simple

Like storing water, conservation needs no professional — but I am glad to help you set it up.

- **What I do:** help you spot your household's big water users, build easy conservation habits, and fit them into your whole outage plan.
- **What you can do alone:** honestly, all of it — these are habits, not installations, and they start the moment you choose.
- **A pro is not needed** for conservation itself, only for the equipment layers it supports.

I am a patient tech helper, and I will never sell you something you do not need. Conservation is the friendliest, cheapest part of your whole plan — mostly it is knowledge and a few buckets. If you want help weaving it in, that is where I come in.

★ Free advice for the free layer

This layer costs nothing, and neither does asking about it. Call or text (330) 200-8042 if you would like help building your conservation habits.

The mistakes that catch people out

Most water-stretching regret comes from a few easy oversights.

- **Flushing freely** with fresh water instead of saved or greywater.
- **Draining water** that could have flushed a toilet or watered a plant.
- **Running the tap** to wash hands and dishes instead of using a basin.
- **Doing laundry and long showers** as usual, draining the supply fast.
- **Forgetting free sources** — melted snow and caught rain for the thirsty jobs.

Our common-mistakes guide covers each in detail. Every one is just a habit, and every habit is easy to change once you notice it.

✓ Notice, then adjust

Most water waste is simply habit — flushing and running taps out of reflex. Noticing those reflexes in an outage, and adjusting, saves the most water of all.

Questions worth asking yourself

A few minutes with these turns conservation from a vague idea into a ready plan.

Q: What are my home's biggest water users?

Usually flushing, showers, and laundry. Knowing yours tells you where the easy savings are.

Q: Where will my flushing water come from in an outage?

The filled bathtub, saved greywater, melted snow, or caught rain — have a plan so you are not using fresh water to flush.

Q: What no-rinse supplies do I keep on hand?

Wipes, hand sanitizer, and no-rinse products keep everyone comfortable while sipping water instead of pouring it.

Q: How much can I realistically stretch my supply?

With good habits, often two or three times as far. That can turn a day's water into several days'.

✓ Plan the flushing water

The one thing worth deciding in advance is where your flushing water comes from. Settle that, and the rest of conservation falls into place.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about stretching water in an outage.

Q: How can I make my stored water last longer?

Protect drinking water first, flush with saved or greywater, wash in a basin, use no-rinse hygiene, and pause laundry and long showers. Good habits can stretch your supply two or three times over.

Q: Do I really not need to flush every time?

In an outage, no. 'Let it mellow' for liquids, and bucket-flush with saved water when needed. Flushing is often the biggest water user, so this saves the most.

Q: Can I use dishwater to flush the toilet?

Yes — greywater like dishwater and bathwater is perfect for flushing. Catch it in a basin or bucket instead of letting it drain away.

Q: Is it safe to drink melted snow or rainwater?

Treat it first — boiling is simplest. Melted snow and caught rain are best used untreated only for flushing, cleaning, and the garden.

★ Still have a question? That is what I am here for

There is no silly question. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and we will build your conservation habits together.

A gentle word about cost

This is the cheapest page in the whole category — conservation is essentially free.

A few buckets, a basin, some wipes and hand sanitizer, and you have everything conservation needs. There is no equipment to buy, nothing to install, and no fuel to burn. The savings are pure: less stored water needed, less generator fuel, and less strain on the septic pump, all for the price of a few habits.

That is what makes conservation such a good deal. It multiplies every other layer of your plan while costing almost nothing itself. If money is tight, this and stored water are the two layers that still give you real security for very little.

★ The best free layer there is

You will not spend a dollar to make your water last two or three times longer. And when you are ready for the equipment layers, my first visit is a flat \$99 with a 30-day come-back-free guarantee.

Bringing it all together

If this guide did its job, you have a bag of easy water-stretching tricks. Here it is in three lines.

- ❑ **Priorities:** drinking water first, everything else on reused or general-use water.
- ❑ **Biggest savers:** smart flushing, basin washing, and pausing the big users.
- ❑ **Free refills:** melted snow and caught rain for the thirsty non-drinking jobs.

Put these to work and a modest water store carries your household far longer than you would expect — while your generator runs less and your septic pump breathes easier. It is the layer that quietly makes everything else better.

★ And whenever you would like a hand

That is exactly what I do — come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made stretching your water through an outage feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't do the licensed electrical or gas work myself — for that I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

Which Water for Which Job

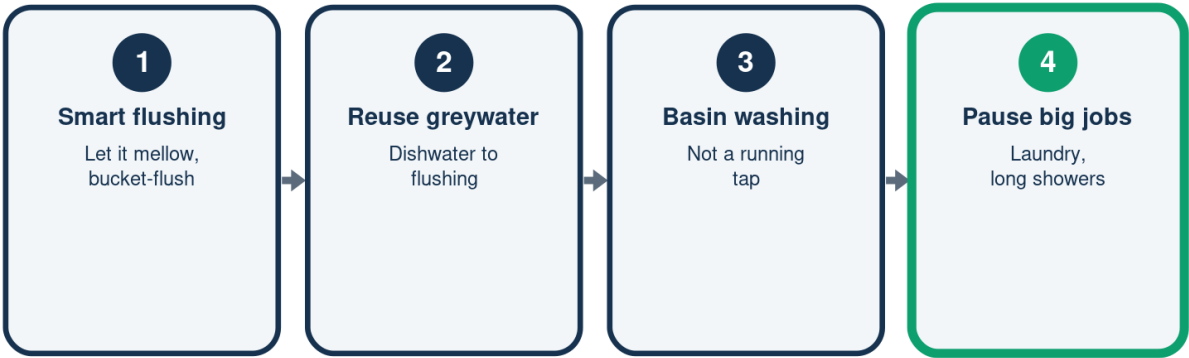
Protect the good, reuse the rest

	Use clean water	Use reused/rain
Drinking	Yes	No
Cooking	Yes	No
Flushing	No	Yes
Garden	No	Yes

Save clean water for drinking; reuse the rest.

The Biggest Water Savers

In order of what saves most



These four can stretch water two or three times over.

Free Water for the Thirsty Jobs

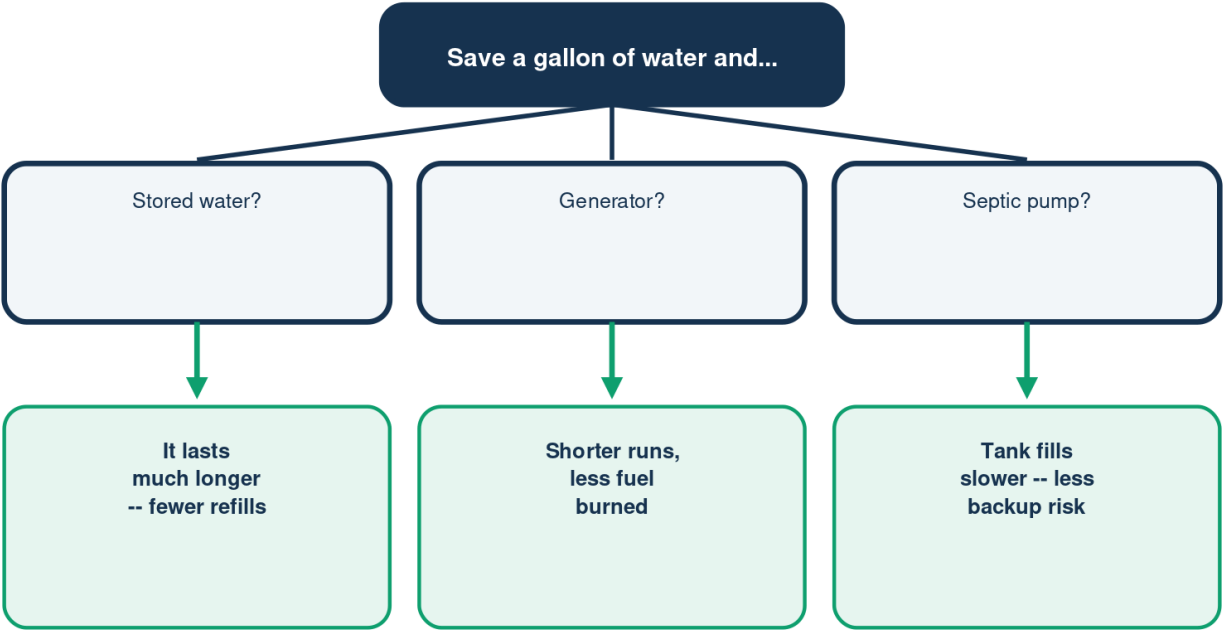
Keep it off your drinking supply

	Source	Good for
Filled bathtub	Flushing,	washing
Greywater	Flushing,	plants
Melted snow	Flushing,	cleaning
Caught rain	Flushing,	garden

Treat any of these before drinking -- boiling is simplest.

How Conservation Helps

One habit, three benefits



Conservation is the free layer that improves all the others.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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